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LAND USE PLAN FOR OPEN SPACE

“THE VILLAGE AT INSTITUTE ROAD”

**PLANNING BOARD
GRAFTON, MA**

Prior to creating the Conventional Subdivision plan and the Flexible Development plan the wetland resource areas on the property were identified and confirmed by the Grafton Conservation Commission. The vernal pool abutting Institute Road and its protective buffer were central to both development designs. We also identified the Town of Grafton as the owner of the land to the west. The Town of Grafton property is utilized for passive recreation. There are a number of trail systems crisscrossing the property. Several of these trails lead to the parcel owned by the Applicant. So the focus of the project design was to respect the vernal pool buffer and provide access to the trail system in the open space owned by the Town. Both the Conventional and Open Space designs maintain a minimum of a 100 foot buffer to the vernal pool, and both plans also provide connections to the abutting trail systems. Open Space Parcel 1 surrounds the vernal pool and serves a number of purposes. It preserves the forest and protects a wetland resource. It provides an opportunity for outdoor education concerning endangered species and natural habitat, and it provides a pedestrian connection from Institute Rd. to the interior of the proposed development. Open Space Parcels 2 and 3 abut the property owned by the Town and provides an additional 4 acres of preserved land to the 96 acres already controlled by the Town. They also provide access to the trail system already in existence on the Town property. The topography of the parcel being developed is not suitable for the construction of athletic fields. But it is suitable for the development of walking trails.

Due to the existence of the vernal pool we approached the Grafton Conservation Commission in order to determine whether or not they had any interest in accepting ownership of the Open Space that will be created by this development. They have indicated that they would be interested. As an alternative we would offer the Open Space ownership to the Town with a Conservation Restriction held by the Conservation Commission..